



Public Involvement Do's and Don'ts

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FDOT Public Involvement Policy

- "...it is the policy of the Florida Department of Transportation to promote public involvement opportunities and information exchange activities in all functional areas using various techniques adapted to local area condition and project requirements."

- Topic #000-525-050-g



What is Public Involvement?

- Public involvement builds trust and confidence
- Public involvement is not only public information.
- Public information is one-way and to inform.
- Public involvement is two-way communication, emphasizing feedback and including response back to the public.
- Public involvement is not just public meetings. It includes project websites, social media, newsletters, responses (via letters or emails), etc.



Benefits of Public Involvement

- Gain understanding of community desires, issues and needs which can help inform transportation design/decision-making
- Public Participation = Public Ownership
- Collaboration reflects community values and more successful projects.
- Risks of litigation reduced; project outcry and delays avoided



Public Involvement Plan Do's and Don'ts

- Do determine local stakeholders early.
- Don't put off creating a schedule for public meetings since these can be critical path.
- Don't forget to review the ETDM Summary Report. This will assist in identifying local issues, identifying agency concerns and provides a project diary.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Project Name: _____
 Project Location: _____
 County/State: _____
 Financial Project Number: _____
 Technical Project Number: _____

In accordance with Part 2, Chapter 22 of the Project Development and Management (PD&M) Manual, the Public Involvement Program is identified in the District Planning and Construction Management Office for review and approval.

Submitted by: _____
 Project Manager: _____
 Date: _____
 Approved by: _____
 Project Manager: _____

Centennial FDOT
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Public Involvement Plan Do's and Don'ts



- Do visit the project area to get a “feel” for the area.
- Do consider planning to hold smaller meetings with HOA's or groups prior to large scale meetings to vet concerns.
- Don't forget to carry forward PD&E Commitments and Recommendations in Design phase



Meeting Preparation Do's and Don'ts

- Do be strategic in who you choose to interact with the public and who works the welcome table. Not all people are comfortable in dealing with the public.
- Don't forget to do a layout of the displays, comment table and seating for the room(s).
- Do know where bathrooms are, how the sun and windows will affect the room lighting, and how to control the temperature of the room.



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Meeting Preparation Do's and Don'ts

- Do remember to advertise for any public meeting (not just PD&E meetings) per Sunshine Law and Section 120.525 Florida Statutes in the Florida Administrative Register and the FDOT website at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.



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Meeting Site Do's and Don'ts

- Don't hold in a public K-12 school (Jessica Lunsford Act).
- Do make sure site is ADA accessible (entrances, bathrooms, etc.).
- Do use Green Lodging facility if holding at a hotel.
- Do make sure there is ample, free parking and location/room is easy to find.
- Do hold at a site that is centrally located.
- Do try to find site with latest technology features (screen, projector) and chairs/tables available for use.



Open House Do's and Don'ts

- Don't "huddle"; disperse staff to better interact with public.
- Do educate staff who are not familiar with project and have them know who to direct public to if not able to answer questions.
- Don't forget to have a translator if needed (check Limited English Proficiency in project area).
- Do remember to display Title VI language.
- Do have a mint!



Presentation Do's and Don'ts

- Do use plain language.
- Don't use acronyms.
- Do make sure that text is large enough for all to read.
- Do have a lay person (non-engineer/planner) unfamiliar with the project critically review presentation prior to meeting.
- Do keep it simple and say as little as possible to get your point across. Talking too much will cause people to tune you out.
- Do be prepared. Practice your presentation. Know what you are going to say. Anticipate questions and develop answers prior to the meeting.



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Presentation Do's and Don'ts

- Do rehearse presentation in the meeting room at a similar time of day (see if lighting, adjacent road noise, or anything else affect the audio or visuals).



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Presentation Do's and Don'ts

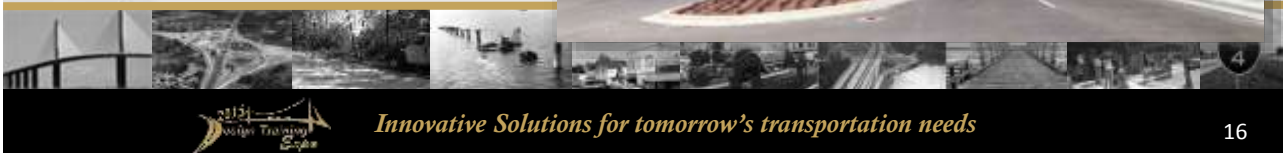
- Do watch use of wording. For example, “minor right-of-way acquisition” may not seem “minor” to the property owner.
- Do be flexible. It may be necessary to have two presentations due to larger than expected number of attendees.



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Presentation Do's and Don'ts

- Don't display items on graphics that will not be implemented



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Presentation Do's and Don'ts

- Do remain calm and do not take confrontation personally.
- You don't have to have an answer for everything. Sometimes people will say something that is not true and it doesn't matter how many facts you throw at them, they will not be convinced and never will be. Sometimes "I hear your concerns and really appreciate that you have taken the time to come out tonight and voice them to us." is the only answer you can give.



Website Do's and Don'ts



- Do use FDOT template.
- Do keep website up to date with latest project information. Post information/displays following public meetings as soon as possible.
- Don't use large files if possible since downloading becomes more challenging.
- Do solicit assistance from FDOT Public Information Officer.



Social Media Do's and Don'ts

- Do be aware of project sites set up by members of the public.
- Do not “like” sites but be aware of discussions since this can provide valuable insight into the public’s perception of a project if they are uncomfortable discussing.



Responding to Comments Do's and Don'ts

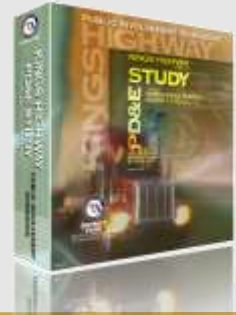
- Do keep a running log of inquiries and respond in a timely manner.
- Don't make it a habit of sending responses to the public via email. The back and forth banter and forwarding of emails can be counterproductive.
- Don't hesitate to pick up the phone and call someone to discuss a question they have.
- Do have one person (consultant point person) review all responses to stay consistent – and get FDOT concurrence on responses.
- Do forward questions from the media (newspaper, TV, radio contacts) and elected/appointed officials to the appropriate FDOT Public Information Officer and FDOT Project Manager



Public Involvement Documentation Do's and Don'ts

Do document all of the following in a Summary Report:

- Invitation letters
- Newspaper (affidavits) and Florida Administrative Register Ads
- Mailing lists (property owners, Elected/Appointed officials, Native Americans, ETAT members, interested parties)
- Sign in sheets
- Comments and responses
- Newsletters
- Presentations and display boards
- Meeting summary/minutes
- Transcript (for hearings)
- Meeting photos



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Public Involvement Presentation Techniques

- Orientation and projection of the speaker
- Modulation, articulation and tempo
- Everyone is looking at you! What not to do....



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Public Involvement Presentation Techniques

- Orientation and projection of the speaker
 - If you are right-handed, stand on the left side of the presentation board (as viewed by the audience). If you are left-handed, stand to the right side. It will help you to avoid turning your back to the audience.
 - Turning sideways reduces the volume by 20%.
 - Your back to the audience reduces the volume by 50%.
 - If you like to stroll around the stage when presenting a PowerPoint, understand that the focus of some people will be away from the screen.



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Public Involvement Presentation Techniques

- Modulation, articulation and tempo
 - Modulation means to vary the strength, tone, and pitch of your voice. Read this out loud quickly:
 “This is something you will find very interesting.”
 Now read this slower, and pause after “something”:
 “This is something....you will find very interesting.”
 You just modulated your voice. It is effective to make a point!
 - Be careful with acronyms. You can lose you audience or confuse them.



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Public Involvement Presentation Techniques

- Modulation, articulation and tempo
 - Don't use words like "articulate" to the public. Use plain language.
 - Articulate your words. Have a glass of water!
 - Watch your tempo. Speaking fast may make you sound intelligent but it is easy to mispronounce a word.



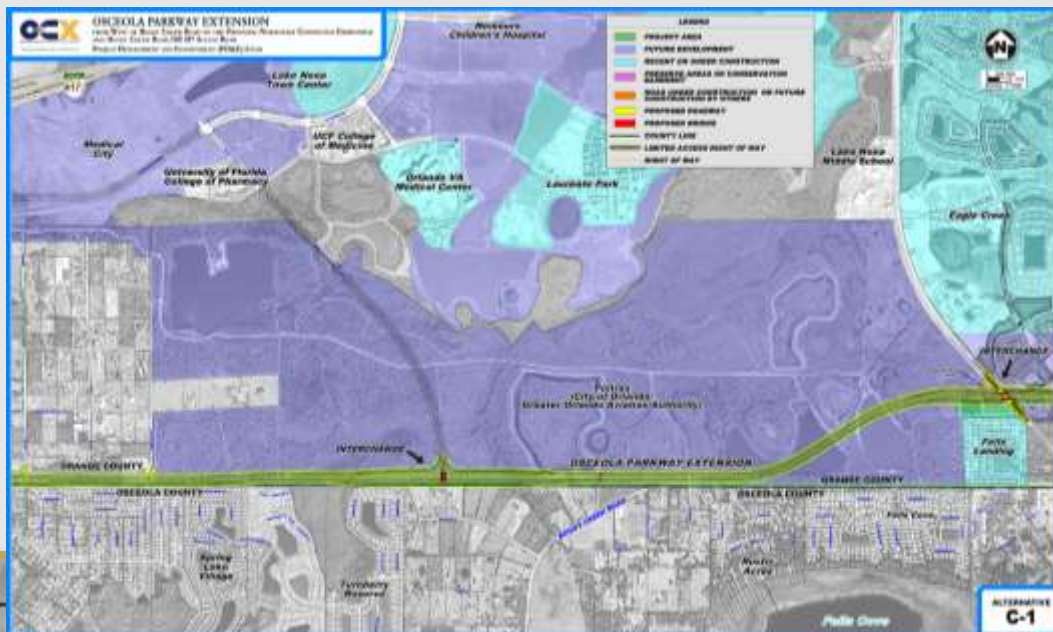
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Public Involvement Presentation Techniques

- Everyone is looking at you! Recognize that you are the center of attention.
 - Do have a hard copy of your presentation. Avoid looking at the screen.
 - If you wear reading glasses, do not remove them to speak to the audience and then put back on to read presentation. Glasses on, glasses off can get annoying to audience.
 - If you are speaking from a podium and have something important to stress, step out in front of the podium.
 - Do remember to smile!



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Questions/Comments/Others' Lessons Learned

